

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /055 W

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R 152045Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9259

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRASILIA 3850

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BR

SUBJECT: HUNGER STRIKE BY "POLITICAL PRISONERS" DRAWS PROMISE OF
NECESSARY STEPS

1. IN ACTION WHICH HAS RECEIVED STEADY, MODERATE PRESS PLAY,
33 "POLITICAL PRISONERS" IN RIO DE JANEIRO STATE'S ILHA GRANDE
PRISON SOME TEN DAYS AGO BEGAN A HUNGER STRIKE, PROTESTING
CONDITIONS IN THE ISLAND PRISON AND CALLING FOR TRANSFER TO A
MAINLAND FACILITY. PRESS ALSO REPORTED EFFORTS BY PRISONERS'
RELATIVES TO MEET WITH GOVERNMENT AND JUDICIAL OFFICIALS, AND
SOME ACCOUNTS SUGGESTED THEY WOULD BE RECEIVED BY JUSTICE
MINISTER FALCAO.

2. THEY ARRIVED IN BRASILIA MAY 12, AND WHILE THEY DID NOT
SEE FALCAO, THEY DID VISIT THE CONGRESS, THE SUPREME COURT,
THE SUPREME MILITARY COURT, AND THE PENITENTIARY COUNCIL, WHERE
THEY REPORTED ON CONDITIONS AT ILHA GRANDE. ON MAY 14, SENATE
MINORITY LEADER FRANCO MONTORO TOOK THE FLOOR TO MENTION THEIR
DEMARCHE AND REQUEST THAT THE MATTER BE LOOKED INTO AND THE
REQUIRED MEASURES TAKEN. RESPONDING IMMEDIATELY ON BEHALF OF
THE MAJORITY. SENATOR VIRGILIO TAVORA SAID HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT
ONCE THE MATTER WAS CONVEYED TO PRESIDENT GEISEL, THE "NECESSARY
MEASURES" WOULD BE TAKEN TO PUT RIGHT (SANAR) THE SITUATION.

3. COMMENT: AS TAVORA'S PROMPT AND APPARENTLY COMFORTABLE
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RESPONSE SUGGESTS, THS GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE HAND-

LING THIS MATTER, WHICH HAS EMERGED IN THE CONTEXT OF PRISON
CONDITIONS AND NOT AS A POLITICAL ISSUE OF ANY WEIGHT OR SENSI-
TIVITY. MORE MAY BE HEARD ABOUT IT IN THE COURSE OF THE
RECENTLY-INSTALLED PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON THE
STATE OF THE NATIONAL PENITENTIARY SYSTEM. WE NOTE THAT THIS
IS NOT THS FIRST TIME PRISONERS AT ILHA GRANDE HAVE PROTESTED
CONDITIONS THERE, AND UMLESS THE GOVERNMENT CLOSES THE FACILITY,
IT IS UNLIKELY TO BE THE LAST. END COMMENT
CRIMMINS
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